the period February to May inclusive in 1934 the amount of fertilizer carried on the railways was 11,404 tons greater than that carried in the corresponding period of 1933. The consumption of fertilizers for the whole year, which is discussed later, showed a substantial decline. Though definite information is not available, there is reason for believing that the increase for the period specified above is due essentially to increased top-dressing on the part of sheep-farmers, together with an increased use of fertilizer on autumn-sown cereals, and that the amount of top-dressing carried out by dairy-farmers has declined.

Another development which may be interpreted as indicative that attention is being given to future efficiency is the much increased demand and higher prices for cattle of beef type. Some of this increased demand undoubtedly arises from the recent developments in respect to chilled beef, but the greater part of it is widely considered to be due to an increased employment of cattle as essential auxiliaries in efficient pasture-management over those extensive grassland areas which were originally occupied by forest and which tend to be over-run rapidly with secondary weed growth unless stocked adequately by cattle.

That by means of pig-raising many dairy-farmers are endeavouring to reinforce their positions weakened by the unsatisfactory state of the butterfat-market is indicated not only by a substantial increase in the number of sows, but also by the greater and more widespread interest in the best available knowledge relative to feeding and breeding.

There is conclusive evidence that sheep-farmers are taking advantage of improved returns from their produce to strengthen their flocks and to put their holdings in better repair where necessary. In illustration of the latter point, the weight of plain wire imported in May 1934, was 160 per cent. of that imported in May, 1933. That flocks are being strengthened substantially is indicated not only by the interim sheep returns, which disclose an increase for the Dominion of 794,804, but also by decreases in the killings for export of sheep and of lambs, the latter being interestingly associated with a record lambing.

Judging from the sales of lucerne cultures by the Department, an area of lucerne exceeding 6,000 acres was sown during the year. After allowing for a decrease on account of age, &c., in the acreage previously established, this provides for a further increase in the Dominion lucerne crop, which has had a steady upward trend for several years. This conforms with the advice of the Department, which advocates increased sowings of lucerne in a number of districts.

Though the complete figures for the 1933–34 dairying season are not available, it is known that the season will be characterized by a new record in respect to production. For the eleven months ended June, 1934, 133,705 tons of salted and 4,632 tons of unsalted, a total of 138,337 tons of butter, were graded. In the preceding season 121,637 tons of salted and 4,390 tons of unsalted, a total of 126,027 tons, were graded. The increase for the period ending June, 1934, is 9·76 per cent. For the eleven months ended June, 1934, the quantity of cheese graded was—white, 69,499 tons; coloured, 33,640 tons; a total of 103,139 tons. For the corresponding period in 1933 the quantity of cheese graded was 71,330 tons of white and 28,794 tons of coloured; a total of 102,124 tons. When the totals of butter and cheese are converted into their butterfat equivalent, it represents an increase of 7·955 per cent. in butterfat-production for the eleven months compared with the corresponding period in 1932–33.

The estimated percentage increase in the number of cows milked in the 1933–34 season compared with the 1932–33 is slightly smaller than the percentage increase in butterfat-production, and, as any difference in local consumption may be assumed not to affect the position materially, it seems likely that the average production per cow slightly exceeds that for the 1932–33 season, when the average for total cows, dry and in milk, was 215·1 lb., and for cows milked was 230 lb., of butterfat. The local consumption of butter, which has risen steadily in the past ten years, and which is the highest recorded in the world, was 38·9 lb. a head in 1932–33—the Director-General of Health states, "The average consumption of butter should approximate 1 lb. per week for each individual as a fairly liberal estimate."

The year was marked by a substantial increase in the number of dairy cows. The total number of dairy cows in milk or dry at the 31st January, 1934, was approximately 1,927,000; the corresponding number for 1933 was 1,845,972. It is to be expected that the low prices for dairy products, in conjunction with the improved prices for meat and wool, will lead to the lessening of the substantial increases in the number of dairy cows which have been recorded during the past five years. Considerable support for this belief is to be found in the fact that the boneless beef killings for export for the period 1st October, 1933, to 15th June, 1934, exceeded by approximately 100,000 freight carcasses those for the corresponding period of the 1932–33 season. It may be assumed, firstly, that the increase in boneless beef freight carcasses is associated closely with a corresponding depletion in the number of dairy cows, and, secondly, that the provision for replacements in and additions to dairy herds is proportionately similar